

## ***Judson Dance Theater: The Work Is Never Done***

### **Anna Halprin talks about her workshop and Simone Forti reflects on its inspiration and impact on her practice**

**ANNA HALPRIN:** I'm Anna Halprin and I'm in Marin County, California. When I had my two daughters, I didn't want to be away from them. So down below the house, my husband, Lawrence Halprin, he built me an outdoor dance deck. So it integrated with the woods. It has a relationship to the landscape.

So the dance deck had a tremendous influence on how I began to understand the *nature* of movement. Because it's not like a room. So when you reach your arms up, instead of there being a ceiling above you, there's the sky. So that affects your sense of *up*. You go up in a much different way.

**SIMONE FORTI:** I'm Simone Forti. Anna Halprin was very important to my development. I wasn't a dancer before I got to Halprin. We did a lot of looking at forms in the environment, like watching very thin clouds cross the sky, and how we saw them move, and tried that in our body. You're paying attention to the breeze, you're paying attention to the temperature of the deck underfoot. You're paying attention to the feel of the branch in your hand.

**HALPRIN:** There was a lot of what we would call improvisation. I would simply be giving them my responses. Maybe you could incorporate this possibility. Their responses became their choreography.

**FORTI:** I remember one time Robert Morris had watched a rock—wouldn't you know it? He had watched a rock [*laughs hard*] and then when it was time for us to show each other what we had found, he took a full minute to contract himself into as tight a knot as possible. And so that he was just balanced on a small part of himself.

**HALPRIN:** We tried all kinds of new ideas. One of the most influential ideas was let's work with everyday movement—just everyday movement—and from there, we will jump forward.

At that time, most modern dancers belonged either to Martha Graham or a very strong modern dance personality. And I found that very inauthentic. To become somebody else. Who are you? Not who are you as Martha Graham, but who are you? What is your nature? Your way of walking? Oh, what would happen if you were walking with your mother? Well, what would happen if you were walking with your grandmother? You know, so we began to explore not only the physical aspects of movement, but the emotional aspect. So it all grew not from my personal style at all. Each person had to find their own style. And all of that happened on the dance deck.

**FORTI:** Somebody asked her what happens when it rains. And she says well the rain goes down the cracks between the boards! [*laughs*] Because we'd be out there [*laughs*]....